disbursement of committed aid/loans and to ensure that dependence on external financing is progressively reduced.

Electoral reforms to discourage non-serious candidates to contest as independents

362. SHRI P. N. SUKUL:
SHRIMATI SUDHA VIJAY JOSHI:

Will the Minister of LAW AND JUSTICE be pleased to state:

(a) how many candidates filed their nominations as independents for the Lok Sabha elections held recently;

(b) how many of them were elected as Members of Parliament and how many lost their deposits; and

(c) whether Government are considering to introduce reforms in the electoral laws with a view to discouraging non-serious candidates from contesting elections as independents?

THE MINISTER OF STEEL AND MINES WITH ADDITIONAL CHARGE OF THE MINISTRY OF LAW AND JUSTICE (SHRI DINESH GOSWAMI): (a) 3634 independent candidates filed their nominations for the Lok Sabha Elections, 1989.

(b) 13 independent candidates were elected. Number of candidates who forfeited deposits is being collected from the concerned Chief Electoral Officers.

(c) This is among the proposals presently under the consideration of Government.

Total votes polled by different parties in the General Elections

363. SHRIMATI SUDHA VIJAY JOSHI:
SHRI RAJNI RANJAN SAHU:

Will the Minister of LAW AND JUSTICE be pleased to state:

(a) the approximate percentage of the total votes polled in favour of different national parties in the General Elections to Lok Sabha held recently; and

(b) the corresponding figures in the General Elections held in 1984?

THE MINISTER OF STEEL AND MINES WITH ADDITIONAL CHARGE OF THE MINISTRY OF LAW AND JUSTICE (SHRI DINESH GOSWAMI): (a) and (b) The information is being collected and will be laid on the Table of the House.

Franchise exercised by the youths in 18 to 21 years of age group in the General Elections

364. SHRIMATI SUDHA VIJAY JOSHI: Will the Minister of LAW AND JUSTICE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that many youths in the 18 to 21 years of age group got voting rights during the General Elections to Lok Sabha, held recently;

(b) if so, what is the approximate percentage of those who exercised their franchise in the General Elections; and

(c) whether any study relating to their reaction in getting voting rights have been conducted?

THE MINISTER OF STEEL AND MINES WITH ADDITIONAL CHARGE OF THE MINISTRY OF LAW AND JUSTICE (SHRI DINESH GOSWAMI): (a) The voting age having been reduced to 18 through an amendment to article 326 of the Constitution, all those who had attained the age of 18 as on 1st April, 1989, got such voting rights.

(b) The Election Commission has informed that 35.7 million persons in the age group of 18 to 21, had been added to the electorate for the recent Lok Sabha elections and youths in large numbers had also participated in the elections. However, no compiled statistics are available regarding the exact number of persons in this age group who had actually voted.

(c) Lowering of the voting age has been welcomed by everyone including the youths